

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, JM
SUBJECT: JAMAICAN HOTELS BOOKED SOLID AS TOURISM CONTINUES
TO IMPROVE

REF: KINGSTON 0979

1. ACCORDING TO A QUICK SURVEY REPORTED IN THE JAMAICA DAILY NEWS OF MARCH 12, ALL THE POPULAR NORTH COAST HOTELS ARE BOOKED SOLID OVER THE EASTER WEEKEND. THIS HOLDS FOR THE MONTEGO BAY, OCHO RIOS, PORT ANTONIO AND NEGRIL AREAS.
2. HOTELS IN THE CORPORATE AREA ARE NOT HEAVILY BOOKED. THE KINGSTON-SHERATON IS FAR FROM BOOKED UP, AND THE 350-ROOM PEGASUS IS PROBABLY ONLY 50 PERCENT BOOKED FOR THE EASTER WEEKEND.
3. ACCORDING TO MR. JAG MEHTA, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HOTELS AND PROPERTIES, THE CURRENT WINTER SEASON HAS SO FAR SHOWN A 60 PERCENT BETTER OCCUPANCY THAN 1977. AVERAGE OCCUPANCY IS RUNNING AT ABOUT 68-70 PERCENT. SOME OF THE MOMENTUM OF THE CURRENT WINTER SEASON WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR THE SUMMER, WHICH IS THE TRADITIONAL LOW SEASON. HE SAID THE CHARTER PROGRAM WILL BE CONTINUED DURING THE

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SUMMER AT LEAST TWICE WEEKLY. MR. MEHTA THINKS OCCUPANCY SHOULD BE 50 PER CENT BETTER THAN LAST SUMMER. HIS SUMMER FORECAST FOR THIS YEAR WOULD BE AN AVERAGE 45 PER CENT OCCUPANCY. FOR THE 1978 SUMMER AND THE 1978/79 WINTER COMBINED HE EXPECTS AN OVERALL AVERAGE OF 60 PER CENT OCCUPANCY. HE ATTRIBUTES THIS TURN-AROUND IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY TO THE FACT THAT "TOURISTS FEEL THEY CAN GET

VALUE FOR THEIR MONEY, AND JAMAICA'S RATES ARE THE LOWEST
IN THE CARIBBEAN, COMPARED TO PUERTO RICO, BAHAMAS AND
BARBADOS."

COMMENT: THE EMBASSY CAN CONFIRM THAT NORTHCOAST HOTELS
ARE ALL BOOKED UP FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. MURRAY HARRIS,
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER OF JAMAICA HOTEL AND TOURIST
ASSOCIATION, WHO HAS RECENTLY VISITED THE NORTHCOAST AND
MADE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE TOURIST INDUSTRY CONCURS WITH
MR. JAG MEHTA'S PROJECTIONS.
IRVING

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